

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Date: Thursday, 23 July 2026

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Council Chamber

Present: Councillors: Jim Brown (Chair), Rob Henry (Vice-Chair), Julie Ashley-Wren, Lynda Guy, Dermot Kehoe, Jackie Hollywell, Matthew Hurst CC, Jaysica Marvell, Liam Morrell Phillips, Nigel Williams and Jade Woods

Start / End Start Time: 6.00pm

Time: End Time: 7.15pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no apologies for absense or declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Community Select Meeting on 07 July 2026 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

**3 OFFICER PRESENTATION ON THE SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Committee received an introductory presentation to commence the review of Support for Young People, which outlined the respective responsibilities of Stevenage Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council. Members noted that, whilst the County Council held the statutory responsibilities for children's social care and education services, the Borough Council fulfilled significant safeguarding duties and provided a range of services supporting young people and families, including homelessness support, community safety, family intervention, care leaver assistance and multi-agency safeguarding partnerships. The Committee was informed of the Council's safeguarding activity, including child protection referrals, information sharing and preventative work undertaken with partner organisations.

The Committee noted the wide range of initiatives delivered by the Council to improve opportunities for young people, including the Mission 44 STEM Futures programme, work experience placements, Youth Advisory Board, Youth Action Group, community STEM events and partnerships with local employers, education providers and voluntary organisations. Members welcomed the emphasis on increasing youth participation in decision-making and improving access to employment, skills development and affordable activities.

Members highlighted the importance of broadening opportunities beyond STEM, supporting home-educated children, young carers and vulnerable young people,

strengthening work experience provision, promoting entrepreneurship and ensuring that good news stories and successful outcomes were more widely publicised.

During discussion, Members identified a number of areas for further scrutiny, including mental health services, safeguarding arrangements, child exploitation, support for young carers, careers guidance, educational outcomes and partnership working with Hertfordshire County Council, schools and other agencies.

The Committee discussed the proposed approach to progressing the review, including the preparation of a set of key questions and a corresponding column identifying the organisation or individual responsible.

It was suggested that relevant studies and evidence should also be collated to support the review. The importance of the Committee's community leadership and challenge role was emphasised, including acting as a critical friend to relevant organisations. Members supported the proposed approach, noting the value of previous scrutiny review experience.

Members requested that future evidence sessions include representatives from relevant organisations to provide information on service delivery and performance, together with supporting data to demonstrate the impact of existing programmes.

It was **RESOLVED** that key lines of enquiry would be developed over the summer, alongside a list of organisations and witnesses to be invited to support the review.

4 **COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE ACTION TRACKER 2026**

The Committee reviewed the Action Tracker and looked at progress against previous scrutiny reviews. It was agreed that the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion review should receive a light-touch progress update later in the year, rather than waiting the usual three-year review period, due to the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation. Members also agreed that updates should be scheduled on Housing Repairs and Housing Voids, recognising that both remained significant areas of focus. It was noted that these reports would provide progress against the original recommendations rather than repeat the full reviews. The Committee further agreed to seek a written update on the New Towns Heritage Centre project where appropriate, to minimise pressure on the work programme.

The Committee also reviewed several older scrutiny reviews and agreed that future updates should be aligned where possible within the Committees work programme. Members noted that a review of the sports and leisure contract with Everyone Active could be considered at an appropriate milestone, while housing allocations would be revisited alongside the forthcoming Housing Strategy work. Resident engagement was also identified as an area requiring a future update.

In addition, Members noted the suggestion from the Environment and Economy Select Committee that the Committee may wish to consider the longer-term social impacts of COVID-19, including effects on school attendance, social isolation and community wellbeing, with further scoping work to be undertaken before any future review was considered.

It was **RESOLVED** that the items on the action tracker be brought back to the Committee at future meetings where applicable.

5 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part I Business.

6 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was **RESOLVED**:

1. That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1 – 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

7 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Part II Business.

CHAIR